

TO : 25X1A
FROM :

SUBJECT: Comments on Draft on Soviet Capabilities & Intentions
(References are to paragraph numbers in subject paper)

1. Marxist-Leninist-Stalinist doctrine and the advancement of the Soviet Union's power position are probably indistinguishable in the minds of Soviet leaders. Although no doubt largely ^{ad}influenced by doctrine and in many respects faithful to it, in their eyes the USSR is the one temple of Marxist faith and citadel of Marxist power, and Soviet leaders are the sole true prophets of the Marxist creed. What serves Soviet power thus serves the Marxist cause, and vice versa.

2. Past evidence points strongly to the conclusion that Soviet leaders have believed time on their side. They have been patient and cautious. But how much of this has been a virtue dictated by necessity - by the unfavorable power position of the USSR? In the West - wherein lie their most immediately desirable objectives - time has provided them with few successes. Their victories have resulted from the use, or the threat, of military force. When their relative power position reaches its maximum, therefore, may they not employ it - provided, of course, they think they can win.

3. The USSR has a way of seeming to try to force history to follow Marxist predictions - for example, synthetic "revolutions" in the Satellites. Now the timetable perhaps calls for the "imperialist" war phase. Korea has offered the opportunity. Maybe they don't so much believe in the inevitability of civil and imperialist wars, but rather see them as a useful means of weakening the

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West and breeding revolutionary conditions

Conditions for a Soviet decision to risk or deliberately to resort to general war:

(a) The USSR must be confident of victory, and must estimate that its current relative power position is favorable;

(b) The USSR must estimate either that eventual attack by the West is probable, or that Soviet aggression by means short of war is no longer feasible.

4. (See comments on paragraph 3 above)

(a) Up to now, yes. But may not Soviet leaders conclude, perhaps now or in the very near future, that the power balance is beginning to shift in a direction unfavorable to the USSR, and that when this shift reaches its climax the West will attack? They probably don't expect us to attack now - but may they not see our present plans - NATO, rearmament, H-bomb, etc. - as offering an intolerable threat which they better challenge now while their power position is so favorable?

The USSR may be seriously alarmed. It may figure Germany is on the way to becoming an effective ally of the West, and that the US is really beginning to get tough (as indicated by our intervention in Korea).

And in Far East - their prospects look good to us - but may they not be feeling the first symptoms of indigestion? (no evidence, I'll admit). May USSR not worry over China, if it emerges as victor in Korea and SE Asia, becoming unruly? And is not success in the East a ^{hollow} ~~bottom~~ victory if the West

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really is on the up grade, power-wise?

(b) (i). If Soviet forces overrun most of Eurasia (as they would)

our present atomic capability can't dislodge them - now. Soviet leaders may figure they can take all we've got now and keep in the fight - but that several years hence we may be able actually to knock them out.

(ii). They might figure they'd have a better chance of surviving a US attack now than preventing one later.

(iii). But most of this allied potential would, by about D plus 6 months, be under Soviet control.

(c) This argument wouldn't carry much weight in Moscow if the Politburo figured (as they might) that the West was beginning to mobilize, and that when it is mobilized, it would either attack the USSR or embark on a course intolerable to the USSR. If we mean business, the rate of increase in actual - as opposed to potential - force in the West may, almost over night, become far greater than in the USSR. The danger here is that right now this thing may start snowballing: we start mobilizing - Soviets get scared, step up their preparations (although they haven't much more they can do), we react by stepping up ours. Soviets suddenly may conclude that it's "now or never."

5. How great a risk has the USSR really run in Korea? Actually, haven't they maintained a position from which they could retreat in safety before the boiling point is reached? Couldn't they have done what they've done in Korea and still be determined to avoid war? They must estimate that they'd have some warning before we attacked the USSR. And if bent on avoiding war, they could

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wait until then to back down. When bluffing, they usually bluff up to the last safe minute, then wither. Has the last safe minute been reached?

Is the USSR really likely to stumble into a war for which it is not prepared? After all, the security of the USSR comes first. Would they jeopardize it in an "accidental" war just to save face, or even to save a Satellite? They haven't jeopardized it to save Yugoslavia, to win in Greece, to succeed in Iran. In Iran they lost a lot of face. What they lost in Yugoslavia far more painful still. What, then, would have to be at stake in the East - West struggle which would get them into a war unwillingly?

General

On the "Two-Phase" war idea, the comments of the consultants might be extremely interesting. Fragmentary evidence has suggested that maybe the Politburo has for some time had the idea that, as a preliminary step to world conquest, they must first achieve a division of the world between East and West under conditions giving the USSR a broader power-potential base. A sort of "why not be friends - you take half and we take half" approach has been implied more than once. (Remember the conversations between

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The paper has pointed out that the Soviet power potential is inferior to that of the West. They of course are concerned about this, and may reckon that it must be corrected before they can prepare for the final show-down. They've tried subversion, diplomacy, etc., and these have failed. But they may figure they must first have most of Eurasia before they can challenge the US, and thus might conclude that:

- (a) The USSR can now overrun most of Eurasia with ease;
- (b) If NATO is permitted to proceed, this may soon become no longer

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possible;

(c) The only effective Western reaction to such Soviet aggression now would be strategic air attacks;

(d) At present, the USSR can survive the full US capability; nothing the US could do to them now could dislodge them from their positions all over Eurasia;

(e) But in a few years, the US may achieve the capability of actually knocking them out with strategic air alone;

(f) By overrunning Eurasia now, and successfully withstanding the US counter-action, the USSR can face the US with the prospect either of negotiating, or of embarking on staggering long-range preparations for inter-continental war. If the US chose the latter course, the USSR would of course do likewise, and would have the power potential of all of Eurasia to draw upon. By then, it would at last be in a favorable position to prepare for the final, inter-continental, show-down.

If the Kremlin finds this principle appealing, now is the time for them to try it. Western Europe will not be so unprotected again for a long time, much of the US force-in-being is vulnerable to destruction in Korea, and strategically the West is badly off balance.

All this, of course, is just hasty speculation, but if this general theme could be subjected to some serious consideration it might be worthwhile.

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